The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning it as an industrial, fraternal and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1757 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 50

Housing Drive In Post-War Planned By Henry Kaiser

Low-Cost, Mass Construction Homes Charted By Industrialist

New York City.—Henry J. Kaiser, kingpin of war production, intends to use his talents and resources in home-building when peace comes, with the aim of bringing costs down by large-scale production so that millions more families can afford to own modern dwellings.

At a conference of the National Committee on Housing at the Biltmore Hotel, Mr. Kaiser expressed the conviction that residential building after the war could do for American economy "what the automobile did for us in the early Nineteen Twenties," and said his organization had been looking closely into the "tremendous" potentialities of the housing problem. After his speech, when asked directly if he would enter this new field, he said:

"If we can be helpful, we will. I call your attention again to the need for cutting costs. That is the direction in which we are aiming and must aim. It is a matter of large-scale output, although not necessarily involving prefabrication."

Citing his revolutionary methods in other industries and their effect on production, really men and women of experts called the prospect of Mr. Kaiser's entry into home construction "one of the most significant developments" for the future of their business. They called attention to his ownership of some plants closely allied with the construction business, including a large streamlined cement plant in California, and his announcement this week of a cut in price for the product of that plant in the face of recent price increases by other producers. They pointed out also the close relationship between shipbuilding and house-building, with many carpenters and other former building mechanics now employed in his yards.

Commenting on the outmoded condition of millions of American homes and the backlog of demand create by war restrictions, Mr. Kaiser said he could see the possibility of "the greatest decade in residential construction on record" immediately after the war, but warned that the future of the industry rested on sound leading practices and said "the nation awaits a constructive financing program which will contribute to low-cost housing."

"In the zeal to lend money for home building there again will be the temptation to finance the cheap and shoddy type of dwelling which has been a blight on American communities for decades," he continued.

"The jerry builder could not have operated without financial assistance. Such professional speculators are certain to appear again to take advantage of a market where demand exceeds supply. There should be a broad plan of agencies among the lending agencies which will recognize and help to establish minimum standards in home building. If the American home means as much as our declarations about it, we should venture on a building boom which will lay the foundations for new slum areas in 1960."

He suggested that new materials and methods might help to bring the desired low-cost home a reality and pointed out that ample funds were awaiting investment in housing but that these funds "must not be frozen for fear of unemployment."

New AFL Program To Aid Disabled

Washington, D. C.—A broad program of rehabilitation for the physically handicapped, especially in the general committee including representatives of labor and war veterans, was suggested by the AFL at a hearing before the Kelley subcommittee of the House Committee on Labor, which is investigating the plight of millions of blind, deaf, crippled and otherwise disabled Americans.

Following admissions by government officials that the present program reaches only a small fraction of the men, women and children with serious defects of one kind or another, the proposal presented by Mr. Labor Nation's legislative representative, Lewis G. Hines, made a deep impression upon the committee.

Hines declared that, with casualties on the battlefield mounting steadily and the number of maimed in factories running a close second, it is obvious that the need for a human program with "teeth" in it will be greater than ever before.

He also hit at the present system, charging it has resulted in the handicapped being "screened out" of useful employment.

"We are going to find that the old-time methods of keeping these people out of jobs to keep down the employers' insurance rates will not work and that it will be necessary to establish a Federal compensation program along the program for physical rehabilitation," Hines declared.

SHIP OUTPUT JUMPS

Washington, D. C.—Output of merchant ships jumped up in November to the second highest level of any month during 1944, the Maritime Commission revealed. Ships delivered reached 254 for November, raising the total for the year to 7,455, aggregating 34,986,333 deadweight tons.

Green Gives Businessmen Pointers On Improving Relations With Labor

New York City.—Elimination of class warfare and industrial strife in the post-war period in order to increase production efficiency and further national prosperity was urged by AFL President William Green at a luncheon meeting arranged by the National Association of Manufacturers.

Confidence and mutual respect between employers and workers "is the simple rule which should be followed in order to achieve this purpose," Mr. Green said. The topic assigned to him was "What I Would Do If I Were An Employer."

"It is my opinion," he said, "that those who serve in a managerial capacity should develop a keen consciousness of responsibility. Responsibility to employers, stockholders and to employes, together with a fair and just profit for industry and labor, should be the objective. The highest wage which the industry could afford, should be questions of primary importance."

Management can contribute to the preservation of the free enterprise system, Mr. Green declared, by recognizing the rights of labor. Unfortunately, he reminded his audience, some industrialists in the past challenged and opposed labor's right to organize. It should now be recognized, he insisted, that the very success of industry depends on the full extension to labor of its right to organize and bargain collectively.

He pointed to the production achievements scored by war industries where labor-management committees function as an example of the benefits which industry can obtain from cooperation with labor.

"I am of the opinion," Mr. Green concluded, "that America can never go back to a low-wage standard. The people will demand a share more fully in the earnings of industry ought to be constantly recognized and applied. It has been shown clearly that in many instances high wages serve to increase production and therefore profits and lower unit costs.

"We now face a national necessity of maintaining a high national income in order to meet our war debts and to provide for a sound and high productive power with high purchasing power. The establishment of humane conditions of employment and the establishment of social security are sound economic measures which should be supported by industry and management."

States Must Enact Decent Labor Laws Or Face Federal Action—Perkins

Washington, D. C. — Unless the states enact decent labor laws and vigorously enforce them the Federal Government will be forced to extend its authority, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins told the delegates to the 11th National Conference on Labor Legislation.

Addressing labor commissioners and representatives of organized labor from 42 states, she said she has consistently supported the limitation of Federal legislation in the war effort but impelled to give state labor commissioners a full solemn warning "that unless state's rights are matched with state responsibility for decent labor laws and for vigorous enforcement, pressures upon the Federal Government will grow for further extension of federal authority."

Miss Perkins reviewed the course of state labor legislation within the past 10 years and expressed the hope that the Federal Government would not have to take action in view of the fact that it has been shown the states can perform well.

"What is why this conference is so important," she said: "It offers supreme opportunity to test the legislative and administrative experience of other states and to determine what is best for your own states in the light of your own economy and needs."

Action of the Labor Legislation Conference was recommended in the fields of basic labor policy, including State minimum wage legislation for the reconversion and post-war, improved and extended wage payment and wage collection laws, state enactments to abolish sub-standard wages and working conditions in industrial homework, protective laws for migratory farm laborers, raising the standards in those states which do not yet meet the 16-year minimum age level in the employment of children, and strengthening state laws governing the promoting safety and health in industry.

"At best this is a penny-wise and pound foolish policy," she said. "The cost of not employing these people will be far greater than any possible saving in workmen's compensation."

Various functions relating to labor matters now scattered through many agencies of the Government, she said, be consolidated in the U. S. Department of Labor after the war," she said, "including those of the Employment Service and the Apprenticeship and Occupational Training Service of the War Manpower Commission and the Labor Planning for Production program of the War Production Board."

"Fixing of wages and prices should be abandoned as soon as possible and the various activities of the government in prevention of industrial disputes and in mediation should be permanently attached to the Department of Labor, including the functions of the War Labor Board, the National Labor Relations Board and the National War Labor Board."

Production Board. Adult education, insofar as it affects working people, should be a part of the Labor Department and a strong working conditions service should be developed there."

While Miss Perkins did not refer directly to the drives to enact anti-labor legislation in many states, the subject proved of acute concern to most of the labor representatives attending the conference.

Passage of amendments to state constitutions in Florida and Arkansas at the last elections dealt a dangerous blow to the progress of organized labor in those states and will unquestionably provoke bitter jurisdictional disputes between the states and the Federal Government in future labor policy, especially on war contracts.

In Texas, the notorious Christian American Association already has begun a campaign to enact legislation patterned after union-busting state amendments ratified in Florida and Arkansas.

Labor Favors Int'l Bill of Rights For Racial And Religious Minorities

New York City.—Thirty-four high ranking labor leaders, headed by William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor were among the 1226 signers of a statement issued by the American Jewish Committee and urging an international Bill of Rights to serve as a post-war guarantee of equality and individual rights for all persons throughout the world just as the American Bill of Rights is a guaranty of individual liberties for Americans.

Approved by President Roosevelt, Governor Thomas E. Dewey and Supreme Court Justices Owen J. Roberts and Frank Murphy, the declaration, issued by Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee, calls for the recognition of the individual human being "as the cornerstone of our culture and civilization" and the establishment of the "new world" on the basis of the "dignity and inviolability of the person."

The approval of President Roosevelt was expressed in a letter to Judge Proskauer from William D. Hassett, Secretary to the President. "While it is not the province of the President to sign documents of this nature," Mr. Hassett said, "I can assure you that he fully appreciates the high purpose which the signers of this petition have in mind."

The six points of the Declaration of Human Rights call for:

1. An international Bill of Rights "to guarantee for every man, woman and child, of every race and creed and in every country, the fundamental rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

2. A world in which the rights of national sovereignty do not permit any violation of individual liberties within the borders of fundamental human rights "on the ground that these are matters of internal concern."

3. Recognition of the fact that human rights are not respected "when reasons nation "is a matter of international concern" and specifically "throws upon the peace-loving nations the burden of relief and redress."

4. A policy of "asylum" for those "who have suffered under the Hitler regime because of race, creed or national origin."

5. A plan for repatriation, with human rights insisted on for "those who have been driven" from their homes.

6. International machinery wherever necessary to "guarantee" the rights of the world" for "those who wander the earth unable or unwilling to return to the scenes of unforgettable horror" from which they fled.

News Briefs

TOBIN REPORTED DUE TO SUCCEED PERKINS

Washington, D. C.—Rumors are again gaining currency in the nation's capital that Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins will resign.

Among those mentioned as a possible successor to the Cabinet post is Daniel J. Tobin, President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and an AFL Vice President. He is reported to have the combined backing of the AFL and CIO.

Along with the rumors of Miss Perkins' resignation come reports that the Administration is ready to fulfill labor's demands for reorganization of the Department of Labor and the transfer to it of many Government bureaus dealing with labor problems but now operating independently.

LABOR CONCERNED OVER INT'L POWER POLITICS

Washington. D. C.—Labor leaders here are deeply concerned over critical political situations which have arisen in some of the liberated countries of Europe.

The American Federation of Labor has repeatedly supported the policy that the people of these countries are entitled to self-determination and the right to select the kind of Government they wish by democratic means. It was assumed that such rights would be guaranteed to these countries when peace came.

However, recent uprising and manifestations indicate that Great Britain and Soviet Russia are jarring the gun on the peace treaty and attempting to influence the form of Government of the smaller nations of Europe before any plebiscite can be held.

STRIKE LOSSES DROP IN CANADIAN INDUSTRY

Ottawa, Can.— Misrepresentations regarding strikes in Canada were blasted in most emphatic fashion by a report issued by the Department of Labor.

It revealed that during the first 10 months of this year there lost as a result of strikes and walkouts was .87 per cent less than during the same period of 1943.

Up to October 31, the report said, there were 172 strikes, involving 74,-191 workers and resulting in a loss of 885,924 man-days.

In October there were only 16 strikes, with a loss of 6,835 man-days, as against 36 strikes and a loss of 25,039 man-days in October, 1943.

MACHINISTS WIN AT TWO DOUGLAS PLANTS

Santa Monica, Cal.—Two more units of the Douglas Aircraft Company—which for years had been the "open shop" mast of the aviation industry—have been captured by the International Association of Machinists.

Latest are the Spar Cap and DPO plants of Douglas. In the Spar Cap election, the IAM defeated the CIO United Automobile Workers by a two-to-one majority, and in the DPO by a seven-to-one margin.

Others previously organized are the company's "parent" factory at Santa Monica and large plants at Tulsa, Okla., and El Segundo, Calif. Over 60,000 Douglas workers are now under the IAM flag.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS SMASH TWO COMPANY UNIONS

Washington, D. C.—"Company unions" on two more utilities have been knocked out by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

In an election at the Kokomo, Indiana Gas & Electric Company, the Brotherhood swamped a so-called "independent Utilities Union" by a majority of more than 2 to 1.

Similarly, in a similar poll at the Iowa Southern Utilities Company, the IBEW swept out a "dummy" union by a margin almost as great.

The ranoff victory followed an earlier election in which a CIO union was eliminated.

PHILADELPHIA LABOR FIGHTS FOR SCHOOLS

Philadelphia.—James L. McDevitt, president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, AFL, has pledged the services of his union to help the Board of Education obtain a larger 1945 budget for Philadelphia's public schools.

"Our community is not spending enough for education," McDevitt told 200 school principals, counselors and administrators gathered in the Board of Education Building. "We can't run a decent city government without adequate revenues with which to operate our schools."

ILO OPERATING ITS PARIS BRANCH

Montreal, Can.—The International Labor Office announced that its Paris branch had resumed open operations, and at the same time said the branch had been operating clandestinely throughout the German occupation of Paris.

Since late in 1940, the functions of the branch had been carried on secretly by Mlle. Amiee-Elise Rommel, branch secretary, from her two-room apartment, and Edward J. Phelan, acting director of the ILO.

AFL Unions Rush Workers To "Critical" War Plants

40-Hour Week After Germany's Defeat Planned In Reconversion Program

Chicago.—The Government plans a 40-hour week on reconversion jobs after the defeat of Germany, William Haber, newly-appointed labor advisor to War Mobilization Director James F. Byrnes, revealed here.

Until Japan is crushed, this program will offer a two-way advantage, Mr. Haber said. It will spread the work in civilian industries during the reconversion period and it will offer the inducement of overtime and extra earnings to those workers needed for carrying on war production.

For the moment, Mr. Haber emphasized, there exists a condition in which war production has absorbed for all practical purposes the entire working force of the country, and required increases in critical materials such as shells must be met by taking workers from other industries.

Unemployed persons still total about half a million, he added, but they are in the wrong places, with the wrong skills.

The next phase, expected after the defeat of Germany, Mr. Haber said, would probably see a very high level of industrial production, with war production dropping from 30 to 40 per cent. He expected the discharge of between 4,000,000 and 4,500,000 soldiers in the year after V-E Day, and a probable increase in general unemployment from its current level to possibly 2,000,000 or 2,500,000 persons.

The last phase of reconversion, to come after victory over Japan, Mr. Haber added, would see the release of between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 munitions workers and the discharge over a period of time of possibly 7,000,000 or more soldiers. While he did not commit the Government to a program for that part of the problem, he said:

"We recognize the problem, we shall not duplicate 1918, I am sure."

Severance Pay For All War Workers Asked By AFL As Post-War Cushion

Washington, D. C. — The principle of severance pay to cushion temporary post-war unemployment adjustments should be extended to all workers, the American Federation of Labor urged.

The severance-pay allowance was embodied in the National War Labor Board's recent decision in the steel wage case.

The AFL views were given in a concurring opinion by George M. Harrison, secretary-treasurer, and Matthew Woll, vice-president.

They welcomed the WLB's dismissal-pay order for steel workers, but contended that "the real decision" the workers themselves," they added, the majority of the WLB refuses to consider in the prima facie case against the Little Steel formula and to make specific recommendations to the President.

"This entire case was designed to confine the WLB to that the 15 per cent maladjustment allowance (Little Steel formula) to offset the rise in the cost of living was unjust and inequitable. The refusal of the WLB to act on this issue again demonstrates clearly that the board has succeeded in freezing wages by delay and inaction."

"Despite exhaustive studies of the cost of living and an abundance of documentary testimony from the of comprehensive Congressional action will renew their effort to make applicable to all workers any decision by the WLB on this issue."

Mr. Meany and Mr. Woll said that, other cases, the WLB extended to steel workers "merely the benefits of its established policies on certain fringe issues" relating to vacations, holidays and maintenance of membership. But in refusing an "entirely ill-advised position" against a general 10 cent increase,

"Despite exhaustive studies of the cost of living and an abundance of documentary testimony from the workers themselves," they added, the majority of the WLB refuses to consider in the prima facie case against the Little Steel formula and to make specific recommendations to the President.

"This entire case was designed to confine the WLB to that the 15 per cent maladjustment allowance (Little Steel formula) to offset the rise in the cost of living was unjust and inequitable. The refusal of the WLB to act on this issue again demonstrates clearly that the board has succeeded in freezing wages by delay and inaction."

We're Proud Of These Heroes

YOUNG TEAMSTER AWARDED DSC

Washington, D. C.—"For distinguished heroism displayed when under heavy enemy fire," 20-year old Sgt. William E. Dreher, Jr., Cleveland, Ohio, member of the Teamsters Union, Local 407, Cleveland, was recently awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Army's second highest medal, on a battlefield in France.

Sgt. Dreher, then Private First Class, was a member of a Ranger battalion which was one of the first assault waves to hit the Normandy beach on D-Day. There he won his medal on the following day, June 7, at St. Pierre du Mont, France. Advancing at the head of a column into this village, he met point blank machinegun fire from the Nazis and, without a moment's hesitation, coolly continued forward and destroyed the gun.

Then, continuing his advance into the village, Dreher suddenly found himself subject to a barrage of enemy mortar and small arms fire. Rather than be surrounded, he engaged in the uneven fight, killing two enemy riflemen and standing his ground until the Nazis, evidently thinking themselves overpowered, fled.

In the words of the War Department citation: "Private First Class Dreher's heroic action is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

The young hero's father, William W. Dreher, has been a member of Local No. 108, Cleveland, Carpenters and Joiners, AFL, for twenty-five years. A brother, Robert, is employed in New Orleans, La., and is a member of Local No. 5, International Association of Heat and Asbestos Workers, AFL.

IRONWORKER GETS BRONZE STAR

Washington, D. C.—The Army's Bronze Star Medal has been awarded to staff Sgt. Ray L. Bowen, AFL member from Des Moines, Iowa, for heroism in Normandy, it was announced.

In March of this year, Sgt. Bowen was a volunteer member of a 12-man patrol which went ahead of the front lines to rescue a group of American soldiers pinned down by fire. The rescue party reached the scene too late, and saw about 15 Japanese picking over pieces of equipment taken from the dead bodies of their comrades. Quickly opening fire on the Japs, they killed the entire group.

Then, an enemy force stationed in a commanding position fired on the American patrol, forcing it to withdraw. Sgt. Bowen, a member of the withdrawal with his automatic rifle, courageously exposing himself to enemy rifle and machinegun fire.

On the following day, he again volunteered to accompany a 12-man patrol to wipe out an enemy pocket and on this occasion he repeated his action of covering the withdrawal of the patrol with rifle fire after it had successfully accomplished its mission.

The War Department citation tells that: "On both these occasions he displayed great coolness and bravery." His action were in the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States."

Sgt. Bowen is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Ray L. Cooley, of Denver, Colorado, who was a construction worker before entering the Army. Belonging to Local No. 24, Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, AFL Denver. His stepfather, M. Cooley, is a member of the same local.

CONGRESS FREEZES TAX FOR SOCIAL SECURITY

Washington, D. C.—Congress again has voted to "freeze" social security taxes at one per cent, thereby endangering prospects of a broadened and more comprehensive social security program to meet the nation's post-war needs.

After the House voted 262 to 72 for retroactive measure, the Senate followed along by a 47 to 19 vote.

The overwhelming margins for the "freeze" dimmed hopes that the President might veto the legislation, as its opponents apparently have enough votes to enact it over his veto.

The social security tax rate increase has been postponed three times previously by Congress, largely at the instigation of Senator Vandenberg of Michigan. While labor favored the increase, even though it meant higher taxes for the nation's workers, it was consistently opposed by business and industry.

Emergency Manpower Plan Organized To Meet Army "Shortages"

Washington, D. C.—More than a dozen AFL national unions rallied their forces to make good the Federation's pledge to the War Department to supply emergency manpower to produce increased quantities of critically needed war materials.

Acting under President William Green's orders, Lewis G. Hines dropped his normal legislative duties to direct a concerted drive to get the required number of skilled workers to the jobs where they are urgently needed.

The "must" list submitted by the War Department to the AFL called for 10,000 workers to be rushed at once to some thirty-eight war plants making bombs, heavy artillery, radar, heavy trailers, assault wire, heavy shells, aircraft, propellers, rockets, rocket launchers, batteries and other essential war items.

Immediately, Mr. Hines got in touch with the following unions and impressed upon them the necessity of finding and supplying these skilled and unskilled workers to go to work in the plants designated by the Army: Machinists, Chemical Workers, Automobile Workers, Ironworkers, Molders, Foundry Workers, Electrical Workers, Furniture Workers, Metal Polishers, Carpenters and Fabricated Metal Workers.

When no other means of supplying the manpower is available, the unions have agreed to ask employers in less essential industries to "lend" some of their workers for 90-day periods for transfer to the critical plants, the workers being assured that they will get their old jobs back with their seniority protected on their return.

"We expect to be able to provide the manpower needed in the shortest time," Mr. Hines declared after a preliminary survey of the situation.

As an augment to the resources of AFL officials to the War Department's emergency call, Mr. Hines called attention to a special communication sent by President Harvey W. Brown, of the International Association of Machinists to all local lodges of the union instructing them to have as many members as possible register for the new jobs with the United States Employment Service. The letter concluded:

"The question before us is not whether we will win the war, but it has a great deal to do with the length of the war, as it is known that failure to meet the schedule called for by General Eisenhower will mean needless loss of lives and human suffering.

"OUR DUTY IS CLEAR. IN THIS CRISIS AND WE MUST NOT FAIL. MEMBERS MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ASSIST IN FINDING ADDITIONAL WORKERS WITHOUT DELAY!"

All in all, AFL officials were somewhat surprised by the modest nature of the War Department requirements, considering the tempestuous nature of the complaints about production slowdowns.

They felt more than confident of being able to solve the manpower problems presented by the War Department by voluntary methods and saw no basis for renewed demands for enactment of national service legislation to meet the situation.

President Ray Kelsay, President of the Metal Polishers Union, for example, told Mr. Hines he would be able to produce the men required in his trade within forty-eight hours.

More slowly, but equally satisfied in finding additional molders and foundry workers because wage scales in some of these plants where additional workers are needed are far below those prevailing for similar work in other war industries.

When questioned about this situation, War Department officials said they were helpless to correct wage inequities in foundry shops because of ruling of the National War Labor Board.

Mr. Hines said he is keeping in constant touch with union officials and expected to be able to issue a "progress report" to the War Department and to the public within a week.

Legion To Meet With AFL Heads

Indianapolis.—Two national conferences to be sponsored by the labor relations committee of the American Legion, were authorized by the Legion's national executive committee.

Acting on the recommendations of Labor Relations Chairman Fred G. Fraser, the Legion approved:

A conference to be held in Washington during the first ten days of February, 1945, with representatives of the AFL, CIO, Railway Labor Executives Association and the United Mine Workers of America, to adjust differences, if any, that might exist between organized labor and the American Legion.

A joint conference with representatives of labor and industry at which the general labor relations affecting returning veterans may be discussed and their rights protected. No date or place for this conference has been set.